

August 20

1804 Sergeant Charles Floyd became the first casualty of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. He died from what was probably a burst appendix near the present day site of Sioux City, Iowa. Floyd also became the first United States soldier to die west of Mississippi. Lewis and Clark named the hilltop where he is buried Floyd's Bluff and dubbed a nearby stream Floyd's River.

1855 The first section of the Wabash Railroad from St. Louis to St. Charles was completed. There was no bridge over the Missouri yet, so passengers and freight had to be unloaded on the St. Louis County side, and put on a ferry to cross the river.

1900 One of the most spectacular fires in city history destroyed a three-story building downtown housing a fireworks factory as well as three other buildings. The crowd that gathered to watch the fire was treated to an impromptu fireworks display.

1901 President McKinley issued a proclamation inviting all of the nations of the world to take part in the Louisiana Purchase exposition of 1903 in St. Louis. (The opening date was later pushed back by one year to allow countries more time to prepare their exhibits)

1902 The first birth and the first death on occurred on the World's Fair Grounds. Louisiana Purchase O'Leary was born to Mr. and Mrs. Larry O' Leary. She lived to be nearly 100. Her poppa worked at the Southern Paving and construction camp. The boss of the camp named the child. A few hours later, rigger Alfred Willis died when a sledgehammer fell 75 feet from the Electricity Building and struck him on the head.

1910 Eero Saarinen was born in Finland. His design for a monument to westward expansion at St. Louis was selected in 1948. It called for a 630-foot tall Arch of steel. Saarinen said he wanted to "create a monument which would have lasting significance and would be a landmark of our time. Neither an obelisk nor a rectangular box nor a dome seemed right." He died of a brain tumor in 1961, before his dream became a reality.

1915 St. Louis reported nine inches of rain in 24 hours. At least 12 people drowned and 40 were rescued by boat when The River des Peres swamped a large part of South St. Louis. This latest flood prompted more cries for something to be done about the temperamental stream. A huge sewer would be built to put the river underground as it flowed through Forest Park.

1927 Plans were announced for lavish new theatre at Grand and Washington. The planners said the new "Fox Theatre" would be the second-largest in the world, with 75-hundred seats. Its design was described as "Hindoo Temple" architecture." The theatre opened on January 31, 1929.

1948 The city of Kinloch was incorporated, the largest all-black community in Missouri. Former slaves who wanted to create what they called an "escape society" settled Kinloch after the Civil war. Kinloch faced a myriad of problems from the start, most notably, a

minuscule tax base. The tax base shrank even more in recent years because of airport buy-outs.

1956 Stix, Baer and Fuller announced plans to build a huge store at Clayton Road and Brentwood Boulevard. The store would be the first unit of the planned 34-acre "Westroads" shopping center. Today, the center is known as The Galleria.

1956 The final streetcar on the Broadway line made its last run. Streetcars had been running on Broadway since 1854. But the line closed because plans for the Mark Twain Expressway called for extensive changes on Broadway. Within a decade, the streetcars would disappear completely from St. Louis streets.

1958 A Senate Rackets Committee was investigating alleged corruption in the St. Louis Teamster's Union. There were allegations that a local Teamster organizer with mob connections was involved in the disappearance of half of the \$600,000 Greenlease ransom. The money disappeared the night the kidnapers were arrested in October 1953.

1962 A near-disaster downtown, as a huge fire engulfed the eight-story Carson-May-Stern building at 12th and Olive. Flaming debris fell on rooftops all over downtown, starting fires at eight other locations. More than 300 firemen were called in, 13 were injured or overcome by the heat.

1966 The last building in "Chinatown" came down to make room for a stadium parking garage. The On Leong Merchant's Association and the Asia Restaurant at Seventh and Market were the heart of the Chinese District.

1971 A landmark date for St. Louis drivers. The double-decked elevated section of Highway 40 from 21st Street to Seventh street was opened, connecting the Daniel Boone Expressway with the Poplar Street Bridge. Prior to this date, Highway 40 ended at 20th Street.

1982 Gynecologist Hector Zevallos and his wife, Rosalie Jean, were freed unharmed. An anti-abortion group calling itself "The Army of God" had kidnapped them near Edwardsville eight days earlier.

1986 Mark McGwire made his major league debut for the Oakland A's. He would finish the season with a batting mark of .189. He made six errors playing third base. The next season was officially his rookie year, and McGwire hit 49 home runs and batted .289. He won the AL Rookie of the Year unanimously.

1993 The Coral Court Motel closed its doors for the last time. The owner said it just wasn't worth it to spend the \$1 million in needed repairs. The Coral Court was one of the most famous hotels on Route 66, known for its art moderne design -- and the attached garages.

1998 Mark McGwire hit his 50th home run of the season, one of two that day in a double-header against the Mets in New York. McGwire became the first player in major league history to have three consecutive 50 home run seasons.

2004 Umpire Joe West and Pirate's manager Lloyd McClendon ignited the "Hatgate" scandal. West tossed Cardinal reliever Julian Tavaréz out of the game after finding a what he described as a foreign substance on the bill of the pitcher's grubby hat. Tavaréz hugged the umpire and tossed the hat to a fan at Busch Stadium. He was suspended, but an analysis found there was nothing on the cap except dirt.